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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE 1990s (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.68, "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s"

1. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), on behalf of the Group of 77, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.68.

(i) ENTREPRENEURSHIP (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.25 and Rev.1, "Entrepreneurship"

2. Mr. DUGAN (United States of America) pointed out that the Republic of Korea had been omitted from the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.25. He also noted that Belarus and Guatemala wished to join the sponsors, which was an indication of the prevailing atmosphere of dialogue and understanding.

3. He also pointed out two minor errors in draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.25/Rev.1: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was listed erroneously as one of the sponsors, and, in the third line of paragraph 11, the words "and cooperatives" had been omitted after the words "small and medium enterprises" and before the comma.

4. Mr. SCHIALER (Peru) pointed out that in the Spanish text of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.25/Rev.1, entitled "Entrepreneurship", the English words "formal" and "informal" in paragraph 6 had been translated as "informales" and "formal", while in paragraph 7 the words "estructurado" and "no estructurado" were used. He asked the Secretariat to rectify that minor error of translation in order to bring paragraph 7 into conformity with the text of paragraph 6.

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.75, "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development"

5. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.75.

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.80, "Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind"

6. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced the draft resolution and said that the following words should be added at the end of paragraph 6: "and requests the Secretary-General to make adequate arrangements for 1992;".

AGENDA ITEM 83: INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39, "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction"

7. The CHAIRMAN announced that Australia had joined the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.44, "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti"

8. Mr. ZIARAM (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Central African Republic, Gabon and Turkey had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.44 and that some changes had been made in its text. In the eighth preambular paragraph, "85,000" should be replaced by "95,000". In paragraph 6, the last clause should read "so that the General Assembly can consider it at its forty-seventh session". He asked that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

9. Mr. AJAVON (Togo) announced that Togo had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.44.

10. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Central African Republic and Gabon had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.44.

11. Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.44, as orally revised, was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.45, "Emergency assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia"

12. The CHAIRMAN announced that China and Oman had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.45.

13. Mr. AJAVON (Togo) said that his country had also joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.45.

AGENDA ITEM 85: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued)

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.49, "International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola"

14. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.49, and said that Argentina, Belgium, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Spain, Suriname and Turkey had joined its sponsors. He asked that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

15. Ms. SIMON (Vanuatu) said that Vanuatu had also joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

16. Mr. CANTINI (Italy) said that Italy had also joined the sponsors.

17. Mr. CORREIA (Angola) thanked the international community and in particular the sponsors of the draft resolution for their help to Angola. His Government would do everything it could to revitalize Angola's economy. He pointed out that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had also joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

18. Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.49 was adopted without a vote.

AGENDA ITEM 89: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITMENTS AND POLICIES AGREED UPON IN THE DECLARATION ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR THE REVITALIZATION OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

19. Mr. BARAC (Romania) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.79, which had been drafted on the basis of the informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13, and proposed that it should be adopted without a vote.

20. The CHAIRMAN said he had been informed by the Secretary of the Committee that approval of the draft resolution would have no financial implications for the programme budget.

21. Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.79 was adopted without a vote.

22. The CHAIRMAN said he assumed that with the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.79, draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.13 would be withdrawn by its sponsors.

23. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 91: EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF LIBERIA (continued)

Draft resolution on assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia (A/C.2/46/L.43)

24. Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran) announced that Jamaica had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution, who had accepted three amendments to it on the basis of informal consultations. In the third line of the last preambular paragraph, the words "immediate demobilization of combatants" should be replaced by "encampment and disarmament of combatants"; in the fifth line of paragraph 3, the words "and their families" should be inserted after the word "combatants" and before the comma; and in the first line of subparagraph (b) of paragraph 5, the word "Government" should be replaced by "authorities". He recommended that draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.43, as orally revised, should be adopted.

25. The draft resolution was adopted.

26. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Liberia) expressed his deep gratitude to the sponsors of the draft resolution just adopted, and to the Committee for its clear manifestation of solidarity with the Liberian people. One year before, Liberia had been sunk in chaos and the depths of despair; peace and confidence had returned thanks to the cooperation of the international community, as manifested through its representatives on the Second Committee. The consensus adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.43, and in particular of paragraph 5, would make possible an overall assessment of the needs to be met for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Liberia.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(e) ENVIRONMENT (continued)

Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/615 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

27. Mr. NANDAN (Under-Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea) introduced the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas" (A/46/615 and Corr.1 and Add.1), which supplemented and updated the 1989 report on the same subject (A/45/663 and Corr.1) and should be read in conjunction with that earlier report.

28. Part I of the report contained an introduction and recalled the provisions of paragraph 4 of resolution 44/225, which would be central to the decision of the General Assembly. As could be seen from paragraph 3, the responses received from States, and international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations had provided the basis for the report. Part II

(Mr. Nandan)

outlined the activities of intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Community's decision to prohibit fishing by Community vessels with drift-nets longer than 2.5 kilometres in Community waters or on the high seas, with a very limited and specific exception allowed until 3 December 1993. The report also contained information provided by other intergovernmental organizations such as the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), the Council of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the FAO Committee on Fisheries, the Indian Ocean Fishery Commission (IOFC), the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC), the Permanent Commission for the South Atlantic, the Commonwealth Heads of Government, the South Pacific Forum and the South Pacific Commission (Conference).

29. Part III contained a review of developments by region. Paragraphs 23 to 28 dealt with the Atlantic Ocean, as did paragraphs 4 to 11 of the addendum. Paragraphs 29 to 33 and paragraphs 12 to 21 of the addendum contained information on the Indian Ocean. Paragraphs 34 to 39 and paragraph 22 of the addendum dealt with the South Pacific region. It should be noted that the Wellington Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift-nets in the South Pacific, adopted on 24 November 1989, had come into force on 17 May 1991. Protocol I, which was open to States outside the Convention area, had been signed by the United States, and, as stated in the addendum, Protocol II had been signed by Canada and Chile. Paragraphs 40 to 120 referred to the North Pacific. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the scientific review of North Pacific high-seas drift-net fisheries convened in June 1991 in Sidney, British Columbia, Canada. Scientists from Japan, the United States, Canada, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China had reviewed the data, mostly obtained from a scientific observer programme on the Japanese squid drift-net fishery. The meeting had also considered the impact of large-scale drift-net fishing on four species: marine mammals, salmonids and squid, non-salmonid fishes, and turtles and marine birds. For the purposes of the report, only the sections dealing with stock/species status and impact and information gaps had been excerpted.

30. The conclusions were set out in paragraphs 50 to 120, and part IV, which began with paragraph 121, contained a summary of the comments by States on the aforementioned scientific review. Summing up, he said it was apparent that there was widespread support for General Assembly resolution 44/225; many States had already prohibited or regulated drift-net fishing, and there appeared to be a growing trend towards the acceptance of 2.5 kilometres as the permissible length for drift-nets, a standard that was being applied to drift-net fishing activities both in waters under national jurisdiction and on the high seas, since that method of fishing was considered equally unacceptable in either area.

31. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) said that two years previously the international community had come to understand the need to put an end to large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, a practice that was very harmful to marine resources. New Zealand had been aware of the danger as early as 1981, when it had begun keeping track of fishing vessels using such drift-nets within its exclusive economic zone. That exercise had revealed that the by-catch of non-target species, including marine mammals, was in excess of acceptable limits; it had therefore been decided to ban drift-nets from the exclusive economic zone.

32. None the less, drift-netting boats had reappeared in New Zealand ports after 1984 and, although the New Zealand authorities had been able to limit drift-net fishing in the South Pacific, large-scale commercial operations had been under way on the high seas that had not been detected until 1988. At the peak of the 1988-1989 fishing season, other nations' deep-sea fishing vessels had set between 4,500 and 10,000 kilometres of drift-nets every night. The Governments of the region had become alarmed at the possibility that such activities might endanger South Pacific tuna stocks, which accounted for 45 per cent of the annual world market in tuna.

33. In 1989 the South Pacific Forum had already had sufficient information to strongly oppose the indiscriminate, irresponsible and destructive practice of drift-net fishing and, by its Tarawa Declaration of 11 July 1989, it had demanded an end to drift-net fishing in the South Pacific as a first step towards a general world-wide prohibition. Shortly thereafter, New Zealand had played host to negotiations that in November 1989 had culminated in the adoption of the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift-nets in the South Pacific, also known as the Wellington Convention, which had come into force in May 1991.

34. In view of the opposition to drift-net fishing that had been repeatedly and unanimously expressed in regional meetings, New Zealand had prohibited any drift-net fishing in its exclusive economic zone, had taken several control measures and had enacted a national law in line with the provisions of the Wellington Convention. Fortunately, large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing had already ended in the South Pacific in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/225, as a result of the efforts of the countries of the region. However, the practice was still going on in other areas, to the detriment of rare or endangered species and the safety of navigation.

35. A principal concern for New Zealand was the non-selective nature of that method of fishing and by-catching of species covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Other delegations, actuated by selfish interests, had asserted that the most undesirable aspects of the practice could be eliminated by technical modifications. In fact, it had not been possible to show convincing evidence that the by-catch could be reduced without significantly affecting the catch of target fish. There was accordingly no alternative to abolishing the practice completely.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

36. The General Assembly would shortly be considering agenda item 77 (e), having in mind the commitment implicit in participation in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It was therefore essential that all those countries which had already approved, by consensus, resolution 44/225 of 22 December 1989 should reaffirm their opposition to that practice, which represented a threat to the marine environment and sustainable development.

37. In its resolution 44/225, the General Assembly had mandated a timetable for the implementation of action necessary to address the threat posed by large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing. In its resolution 45/197, the General Assembly had reaffirmed the need for such action to be taken. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 of resolution 44/225, the international community had reviewed the best available scientific data on the impact of drift-net fishing. While there had been gaps in the data, particularly in the South Pacific where some interested countries had not shared information on their fishing activities with that type of net, the data accumulated since 1989 had demonstrated clearly and unequivocally that the practice had a wide range of adverse impacts on both target and non-target species. The monitoring agreements established by the North Pacific countries had produced data which highlighted the destructive nature of drift-net fishing. The only measure which had been identified as capable of preventing those adverse effects was a complete ban on the use of that type of net.

38. New Zealand was pleased to note that the countries involved in large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing in the South Pacific had undertaken to abide fully by the General Assembly's appeal for a cessation of drift-net activity in the region. Nevertheless, New Zealand remained concerned to ensure that those countries would continue to observe the South Pacific countries' wishes in that regard. New Zealand urged all countries eligible to become parties to the Wellington Convention or its protocols to do so.

39. A number of the steps set out in General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197 had not yet been fully implemented. New Zealand believed that the implementation of the moratorium requested in paragraph 4 (a) of resolution 44/225 was of critical importance. The moratorium should be imposed on all the oceans and seas of the world in 1992. It had been shown clearly that large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing had a range of adverse effects which threatened the marine environment and the economic well-being of those with an interest in marine resources, such as the inhabitants of South Pacific countries which were often island countries that relied on marine resources. The task of the Second Committee must be to adopt a resolution in which States would reaffirm their commitment to implementing a total moratorium throughout the world on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing activities. New Zealand was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.7/Rev.1 on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, which was one of the most important draft resolutions before the Committee. He therefore urged its speedy adoption.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

40. One of the countries which had pursued substantial drift-net fishing operations had recently announced that it would cease to use that method of fishing by the end of 1992. That report was very encouraging and would greatly facilitate international efforts to ensure that the practice was totally eliminated. Other countries had also announced their decision to end drift-net fishing. It was to be hoped that their example would encourage other countries to abandon the practice.

41. Mr. MAREHALAU (Federated States of Micronesia), speaking on behalf of the South Pacific Forum countries, said that those countries had submitted a report to the Secretary-General on drift-net fishing in the South Pacific reaffirming the concerns expressed in the reports of the Secretary-General on the subject and confirming the need to take early and decisive action to prevent the adverse impact of that method of fishing.

42. Large-scale drift-net fishing was an indiscriminate form of fishing which could destroy valuable fish stocks as well as non-target species of fish, marine mammals and birds, including endangered species. Long drift-nets also posed a threat to navigation. The evidence gathered to date on the effects of the practice confirmed the view that the continuation of drift-net fishing operations was incompatible with the sustainable use of marine resources.

43. The development prospects of many countries, including those in the South Pacific region, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, were dependent, in some cases completely dependent, on the effective management and conservation of fisheries resources. Drift-net fishing on the high seas could have an adverse impact on fisheries in waters under the national jurisdiction of those countries. In response to the concern of the South Pacific countries about the threats to the marine environment, the South Pacific Forum had issued in 1989 the Tarawa Declaration, which had called for a ban on drift-net fishing in the region. In the same year, the countries of the South Pacific had met in Wellington, New Zealand, where they had adopted the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift-nets in the South Pacific. To date, 16 South Pacific countries had signed the Wellington Convention and three countries from outside the region had signed its associated protocols. The Convention had entered into force on 17 May 1991. Since 1989, the countries of the South Pacific Forum had continued to voice their concern regarding the problem of drift-net fishing and had strongly urged all eligible countries to comply with the provisions of the Wellington Convention as soon as possible.

44. The countries of the South Pacific Forum welcomed the fact that many countries had stopped drift-net fishing in the region. They also welcomed the announcement by Japan that it would suspend its drift-net fishing operations in the South Pacific one year ahead of the schedule stipulated in General Assembly resolution 44/225. They likewise welcomed the decision of the Taiwanese authorities that they would conform with the substantive requirements of the resolution with respect to the South Pacific.

(Mr. Marehalau, Federated States of Micronesia)

45. While some important steps had been taken in the past two years to eliminate drift-net fishing, much remained to be done at the international level. The South Pacific countries were pleased that drift-net fishing had ended in their own region, but they had not forgotten that that method was still being used elsewhere, with adverse effects on the marine environment. The South Pacific countries were concerned that reductions in drift-net fishing in one region might lead to an increase in other regions. General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197 provided a clear timetable for the cessation of drift-net fishing operations. The members of the South Pacific Forum hoped that at its current session the General Assembly would adopt a resolution building on those two earlier resolutions on the subject and ensuring the end of that type of fishing in 1992.

46. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said he believed that efforts to prove that drift-net fishing did not have adverse environmental impacts had failed. On the contrary, there appeared to be sufficient evidence that such fishing constituted an indiscriminate and wasteful practice that should be banned and replaced by responsible fishing methods. Given the increasing pressure upon the world's fishery resources, it was imperative that fishing practices of the future should satisfy the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Drift-net fishing did not satisfy those principles.

47. In its resolution 44/225 on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, the General Assembly had recommended that such fishing should cease by 30 June 1992 unless it was shown not to have adverse effects on the marine environment. As the evidence gathered to date demonstrated the environmentally damaging effects of drift-net fishing, the moratorium proposed in resolution 44/225 should be declared.

48. Australia had become particularly concerned in the late 1980s at the potential impacts of drift-net fishing on the marine environment following the sudden expansion of such fishing in the waters of the South Pacific. In 1989 Australia and other South Pacific countries had adopted the Tarawa Declaration, calling for a ban on drift-net fishing in the region. Towards the end of that year, they had adopted the Wellington Convention, which prohibited fishing with long drift-nets in the South Pacific. That Convention had been signed by 16 countries, including Australia. The United States had signed Protocol I to the Convention and Canada and Chile had signed Protocol II. The Wellington Convention had come into force on 17 May 1991.

49. Australia was concerned at the possibility that the cessation of drift-net fishing in the South Pacific and increased pressure to eliminate that type of fishing from the North Pacific would cause drift-netting fleets to move to other oceans, especially those where the institutional regional frameworks were not adequate to deal with that practice. Australia was particularly concerned at the prospect of continued drift-net fishing activity in the Indian Ocean. The countries in that region had expressed clearly their

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

opposition to such fishing. None the less, that method was still used extensively in the Indian Ocean, in part by vessels that had relocated from other oceans. Australia was concerned that drift-net fishing had considerably reduced albacore and bluefin tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean, as had happened in the South Pacific.

50. Although many fishing methods presented by-catch problems, drift-net fishing involved high by-catch levels of endangered species such as cetaceans and marine turtles. Those species were even less able than the target species to sustain the removals resulting from drift-net fishing. To continue drift-net fishing under those circumstances would be contrary to the principles of ecologically sustainable development, particularly since irreparable damage could occur before any scientific assessment could be undertaken. Australia believed that there was no prospect of successfully reducing the adverse impacts of commercial drift-net fishing by modifying gear or fishing operations. It was convinced that there were more appropriate fishing methods that were more selective, produced higher quality, higher value catch and provided the basis for sustainable production from fishery resources both on the high seas and in exclusive economic zones. It believed that every possible effort should be made to develop environmentally acceptable fishing technologies and to end the use of fishing practices with significant adverse impacts on the marine environment.

51. Australia welcomed recent initiatives by many States to examine options for future legal and institutional frameworks aimed at establishing international minimum standards for the conduct of high seas fishing operations. A cornerstone of those principles should be a commitment from all nations to cease the use of indiscriminate fishing techniques, notably drift-net fishing, and to increase efforts to prevent overexploitation of high seas fishery resources. There was currently enough evidence that the concerns embodied in General Assembly resolution 44/225 were sufficiently justified to impose the moratorium called for in that resolution. Australia welcomed Japan's announcement that it would end large-scale drift-net fishing by 31 December 1992.

52. Mr. KING (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, while the international community had not begun to address the question of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas until 1989, it had long recognized the need to take action on the broader question of conserving the living resources of the high seas. During the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, in which almost the entire international community had participated, that question had been considered in connection with the topic of the high seas. The agreements reached at the Conference were contained in part VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. That Convention, which had not yet entered into force, constituted a declaration of the principles of customary international law with respect to the high seas. Articles 116 to 120 thereof contained basic norms for the conservation and management of the living

(Mr. King, Trinidad and Tobago)

resources of the high seas, which were one of the most important renewable resources in an area open to all nations. Thus the Convention provided the legal framework within which collective action must be taken to ensure sustainable management of the living marine resources of the high seas, which were held in trust for the benefit of present and future generations.

53. It therefore had been fitting for the General Assembly to adopt resolution 44/225 on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing. That resolution had established a specific time-frame in which to address the negative consequences of that fishing method. The matter had received due attention within the international community. For example, at their recent meeting held at Harare in October 1991, the Commonwealth Heads of Government had expressed concern at the continuation of large-scale drift-net fishing and the threat it posed to the marine environment, had urged all countries to comply with General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197, and had welcomed the prohibition of fishing with long drift-nets in the South Pacific.

54. The international community had available sufficient scientific studies to show the negative impact of drift-net fishing on targeted and non-targeted species. His delegation believed that the adverse impact of that method of fishing on marine resources had been adequately demonstrated. It therefore urged full implementation of resolution 44/225, in particular paragraphs 4 (a) and 4 (c). Any measures adopted by the General Assembly at its current session should be geared to sustainable management of the living marine resources of the high seas as well as preservation of biological diversity. His delegation welcomed the decisions recently taken by Japan and the European Economic Community to halt large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing. Decisions on the conservation and management of living marine resources should continue to be adopted without a vote, reflecting the full confluence of political will by all countries to prohibit drift-net fishing.

55. Ms. BEZEREDI (Canada) said that in June 1991, her Government had hosted in Sidney, British Columbia, a scientific review of the best available information on the impact of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing on the marine resources of the North Pacific. The meeting had been conducted in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197. Scientists from Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China and the United States had analysed the impact of drift-net fishing on the by-catch.

56. The results of that review, though not always conclusive, were disturbing. For example, the squid drift-net observer programme had revealed by-catches of many species, and in some cases, some threatened or endangered species of whales, birds and sea turtles had been caught. Furthermore, populations of northern right whale dolphins and Pacific white-sided dolphins were declining as a result of drift-net fishery.

57. It was estimated that over 140,000 salmonids had been caught in the North Pacific in 1990. Some argued that the majority were of Asian origin and that

(Ms. Bezeredi, Canada)

the volume caught was comparatively insignificant. They also pointed out that many of the other marine species caught in the nets were not in danger from the fisheries. Although those points might be valid, they did not mitigate the fact that large-scale drift-net fishing was a great waste of marine resources. In the North Pacific, for example, the "lost" stocks could provide not only a commercial livelihood, but also subsistence food for coastal communities, including indigenous peoples. Canada questioned any practice which unnecessarily destroyed other marine species, such as cetaceans, birds, seals and sea turtles, some of which were already endangered as a result of other human activities in coastal areas and on the high seas. Lastly, drift-nets also posed a hazard to navigation.

58. Canada had been among the first countries to sign Protocol II to the Wellington Convention the previous September, thus demonstrating its commitment to seeing drift-net fishing ended in all waters, not just in those closest to its lands. Her delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.7/Rev.1 on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, which called on all members of the international community to reduce such fishing until the moratorium was imposed at the end of 1992, and to take measures to avoid the expansion of that practice into other regions. The draft resolution contained careful compromises. Canada believed that the imposition of a global moratorium beginning 31 December 1992 was a measure of crucial importance which would promote sustainable management and conservation of living marine resources of the high seas.

59. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that his delegation's comments on the Secretary-General's report (A/46/615) were technical in nature and were contained in a document available to Committee members.

60. He recalled that when the General Assembly had begun its examination of the item two years earlier, his delegation had pointed out that few systematic efforts had been made to collect data essential for the analysis of the environmental impact of drift-net fishing. His delegation had also questioned whether the General Assembly could properly address such a technical question, since it was a global body with no particular expertise. However, Japan had implemented the provisions of resolution 44/225 in good faith, strengthening its regulatory measures and cooperating with the United States and Canada in the collection of statistical data on drift-net fishing operations in the North Pacific.

61. On the basis of the data collected, a scientific review meeting had been held in June 1991 in Sidney, and its report had been unanimously adopted. That data, collected on Japanese fishing vessels, had been used to prepare the statistical analysis of drift-net fishing and constituted the core of the Secretary-General's report. However, there was a division of views with regard to the interpretation of that scientific analysis, which had led to the submission of two draft resolutions. Responding to appeals to the sponsors of the resolutions to make every effort to agree on a single resolution, Japan

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

and the United States had held consultations and had been able to produce such a text. Under its provisions, Japan would engage in large-scale drift-net fishing to a limited degree in the North Pacific for one more fishing season, and would impose a full moratorium from 31 December 1992. His Government had set aside the issue of interpretation of the scientific analysis, and had decided to adopt that agreement in view, inter alia, of the concerns expressed by Member States and of the welfare of all those who depended on fisheries for their livelihood. His delegation remained convinced of the importance of scientific analysis and at the same time, attached great importance to the international cooperation promoted by the United Nations. Therefore, it would make every effort to abide by whatever agreement was reached.

62. Mr. MCDONALD (European Community) said that while it was true that drift-nets had been used in Community waters for a wide variety of species, drift-net fishing had not been very widespread. However, the effectiveness of the practice and its rapid expansion to other parts of the world made it necessary to institute the proposed ban.

63. On 10 December 1990 the European Commission had proposed to the European Community Council of Fisheries Ministers a series of measures for the conservation of fish stocks, including a ban on all fishing with large drift-nets. Those measures met the priority objective of the Community, namely, to make stock conservation policy a central element of the Community's fisheries policy. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197, the Community also had been able to end the use of large-scale drift-net fishing. For example, it had already taken a decision to ban fishing by Community vessels with drift-nets longer than 2.5 kilometres; on 28 October 1991, the Council of Fisheries Ministers had passed a legally binding resolution providing rules for the use of nets longer than 1 kilometre and up to 2.5 kilometres in length and banning fishing with longer nets.

64. The Community measure applied in all waters under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of its member States and, outside those waters, to any vessel flying the flag of or registered in a Community member State. However, vessels that had been drift-netting for the past two years in a limited section of the North-East Atlantic could continue using two contiguous nets of up to 2.5 kilometres each in length until 31 December 1993, provided that they were suspended 2 metres below the surface. Although that exception was very limited, in terms of scope and duration, the European Community believed that it represented an achievement, inter alia, because the measures were binding and were incorporated in legislation with penalties for infringement.

65. Mr. MOORE (United States of America) said that after cooperatively collecting and reviewing scientific data, his own country and others had concluded that large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing was indiscriminate, destructive and wasteful. Consequently, his Government believed that a global moratorium on that fishing practice should be implemented in 1992 for the protection of the living marine resources of the ocean environment upon which all mankind depended.

(Mr. Moore, United States)

66. Two draft resolutions had been submitted on the subject (A/C.2/46/L.7 and L.9). His Government had therefore held consultations with the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.7 and the sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.9 in an effort to reconcile the two texts. As document A/C.2/46/L.7/Rev.1 - whose sponsors included the United States, Japan and seven other Member States - indicated, the consultations had been successful. Moreover, the sponsors of the resolution had now been joined by Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Chile, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Israel, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Namibia, Samoa, Trinidad and Tobago, Vanuatu and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The resolution would be introduced at the end of the debate.

67. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that, although his country was considering various ways to implement General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197, Soviet fishing vessels had never used drift-nets on the high seas; they had only used small nets within the economic zone of the USSR, and only to carry out purely scientific activities.

68. His country was among those which were now feeling the impact of large-scale drift-net fishing. Accordingly, it supported a total ban on the use of drift-nets on the high seas or a moratorium. In the long term, a convention on the subject certainly would be desirable; the adoption of a resolution on the question would facilitate the rational use of the living resources of the oceans and seas and would help to enhance the efforts of the United Nations to resolve current ecological problems.

69. As delegations were well aware, two draft resolutions representing two contradictory points of view had been introduced on the subject. The fact that a single draft resolution had now emerged demonstrated that concern for the common good had prevailed and that it had been recognized that it was important to ensure the protection of another component of the common heritage of mankind.

70. Mr. HALLAK (Syrian Arab Republic) announced that his country also wished to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.7/Rev.1.

71. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea) said that the progress made on the item under consideration was encouraging. It was important for the debate on major economic issues which affected small countries to be transparent. Papua New Guinea also wished to become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.7/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.